

Maine Department of Environmental Protection  
Bureau of Remediation and Waste Management



## School News

March 2003

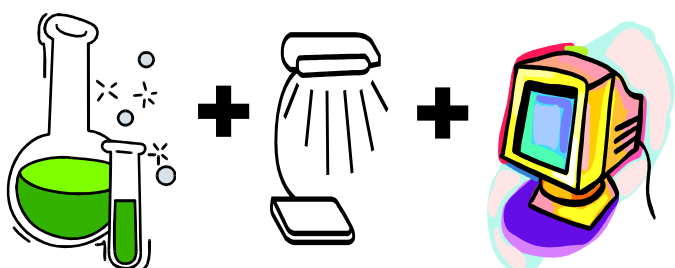
### Let's Get Mercury Out of Maine Schools. Round Two!

#### Mercury Clean-out Round One - A Success!

Last summer, the DEP and its contractor, Clean Harbors, worked with 24 Maine schools and school districts to remove mercury and other obsolete waste chemicals. The program was a resounding success. An average of **12 pounds of mercury** and an average of **68 pounds of hazardous waste** were removed per school!

There were some rough spots. The pick-up of material, originally scheduled for June, was delayed until summer when it was difficult to reach teachers. Scheduling became a nightmare.

We learned a few things. We are ready to do this program one more time in an effort to flush out more mercury, but we need to partner better with the schools. We also recognize that schools must recycle their **universal waste** (UW), typically computer monitors and lamps. If their solid waste facility cannot or will not take UW, the school may need to use a contractor. We would like to do this all in one clean-out: mercury, lab chemicals, lamps and computers. So here's the new and improved program.



#### What Will a Participating School Have to Do?

Because DEP is funding the removal of your mercury, we need a commitment from you to ensure that chemical management and safe disposal will be priorities in your school in the future. Participating schools must agree to meet the following criteria:

- ✓ Assign a science teacher the role of primary contact. This person will be responsible for several tasks including inventorying lab chemicals and mercury, and coordinating with other school personnel concerning universal wastes. He or she must also be available during the clean-out.
- ✓ The science teacher must attend a "hands-on" one day training on chemical management and associated legal requirements.
- ✓ Allocate \$500 or more for the disposal of your universal wastes (lamps and computer monitors) and waste lab chemicals, (other than mercury wastes which DEP will pay for). This is negotiable if it presents an undue hardship or if the school's total waste bill is less than \$500.
- ✓ Sign a participation agreement stating your commitment to the project criteria.

That's it!

## What Will DEP Provide?

### DEP will:

- \$ Pay to get the contractor to your door and home again.
- \$ Pay for the disposal of your mercury, mercury compounds and instruments.
- Provide a free, new cd-rom program for easy inventorying of your lab chemicals. The program will also include a model chemical management plan.
- Provide a free book on low waste, low risk chemical labs and a poster on proper chemical storage.
- Arrange for educational credits for workshop participants through the Department of Education.
- \$ Reimburse participating schools for a substitute teacher on the day of the workshop.



## What If Regulatory Violations Are Found While My School Is Working With DEP?

DEP realizes that this may be a concern for some schools. This is a voluntary project. DEP regulatory staff will not be visiting participating schools as part of this project. One non-regulatory DEP Advisor may visit to offer additional technical assistance on this and other environmental issues. We want to work with you and we want to encourage you to go 'mercury free'. A regulatory inspection is not part of this project.

## What If My School Doesn't Have Mercury But Would Like To Use This Opportunity To Dispose Of Other Wastes?

Great! Although DEP can not pay for chemical disposal other than mercury and mercury-added products, we can provide a list of chemicals that are considered high risk and unnecessary in the school environment as well as guidance on conducting a chemical inventory. Since a major cost of any clean-out is the transportation, which will be covered by the DEP, this would be a great opportunity to get rid of other chemicals at a bargain price!

## When will the Clean-out happen?

The clean-out will occur toward the end of the school year, in early to mid June 2003.

## How will the Clean-out happen?

The DEP will contract with a private hazardous waste company to work with you. You will be sent an audit form for mercury, lab chemicals and universal wastes so that we will know ahead of time what you have for disposal or recycling. If your lab chemical list is extensive, we may schedule the chemist from the contracted waste company to visit you before the pick-up day to look over your inventory. Then, on an appointed day, they will come get your wastes.

A non-regulatory DEP Advisor will always be available to help your school with each step in the process.



## How Can My School Participate ?

If your school would like to participate, please fill out the enclosed Participation Agreement . The non-regulatory DEP Advisor will contact you soon after receiving this form to discuss the project in more detail. Funding is limited and schools are encouraged to register as soon as possible. The deadline for the Participation Agreement submission is **April 1, 2003.**

**For more information...**  
please contact Ann Pistell at the  
Maine DEP at 287-7720 or  
1-800-452-1942 or  
[ann.e.pistell@state.me.us](mailto:ann.e.pistell@state.me.us) .